

DICK HIGGINS NEW YORK**A letter, 17. 2. 1993**

Once I was at a public art discussion panel on which were both John Cage and Nam June Paik. As usual Paik's contributions to the discussion were interesting and succinct, though at that time, perhaps the early 1970's, Cage was far better known. Someone in the audience asked Cage the very stupid question, "Mr. Cage, if you were to die tomorrow, what do you think you'd miss most?"

Without hesitating, Cage replied: "The conversation of Nam June Paik."

I know what he meant.

RALPH HOCKING NEW YORK**Contribution, March 28, 1993**

Paik, what can I say about you? I have tons of your detritus dating back twenty-some years. I could show you you-from old tv sets to the old clothes you left here at various times. I don't throw anything out, just build buildings to put it in. When you called the other day I asked you if you wanted this to be good or bad. You said bad. Predictable. I have been worrying for days, trying to come up with something bad. It hasn't been easy. Damn little of our relationship has been bad.

I finally remembered the time you deliberately broke one of my machines in the name of "art". During a performance at Binghamton University in the early seventies, you smashed a beautiful tiny grand-piano with a dancing lady on top. I had just gotten the thing and hadn't had time to savor it. It was a player piano with a punched paper roll inside just like the big ones and showed great promise as an idea irritant. It was even made in Japan. You asked to borrow it. I told you ok if you didn't hurt it. Hurt it? You fucking destroyed it. I stomped out of your performance and wouldn't speak to you for months. I was pissed. Art hell. Fluxes, Shmuxes. You can only push people from Ohio so far and then we become Ohioans.

A package arrived one day and inside was a smashed violin. You outfoxed me. How could I stay mad? But I haven't forgotten and I will never forgive you. If you die first, I am going to bury the piano with you. If I die first I will leave it to you hoping that you will be haunted by the fact of what you did. Just wait 'til you die. Or I die. If we die. You'll see.

PETER HOENISCH KÖLN**einst Sony/heute RTL, 1993**

Seit der Paik-Retrospektive 1976 im Kölner Kunstverein weiß ich, wie spannend das Medium Fernsehen und seine Gerätschaften zur Vermittlung künstlerisch intellektueller Botschaften eingesetzt werden können. Dafür bin ich Nam June Paik dankbar. Ich empfand es immer als Glück, ihn in den Jahren seither – über Sony – unterstützen zu können, von einzelnen Projekten über documenta VII bis hin zur "Video Art 89" in Köln und Berlin. Er hat mir mit folgendem Brief gedankt:

"Dear Hoenisch Since 77 you changed the course of Video Art History and dabei art History itself. 3 drawings small geschenk for 3 Million \$ donation. Paik 89."

Ich werde – nun über RTL – mit Vergnügen seine Arbeit auf der Biennale 93 in Venedig unterstützen.

SHINJA HONG SEOUL**A Blind Audience, 1993**

I'm a dancer and one needs an eye to appreciate my trade. There's a time when I appreciate more a blind audience that one thousand with open eyes. Nam June Paik is such a case. He said he attended my performances several times but each time he slept away the whole duration of my laughter.

He could have given a definition of art if he so wished, but instead of saying yes, he simply said no. No was more honest answer that yes in this context. In fact, everybody lives his own life, but if one were to be asked what was life, they all laugh it away. Man lives his life before giving definition to life.

PONTUS HULTEN**Paik's manipulation, 1968**

Paik's manipulation of the TV set has the subtle brutality of judo, which turns someone's own force against himself. It is a direct frontal attack on the principal modern machine for manipulating men's minds for commercial or ideological reasons. Paik's counter-terrorism is, of course, based on ridicule.

Only someone who had been deeply involved with the possibilities of the television medium could handle it with such precision. Paik has, in fact, a great faith in TV:

Someday artists will work with capacitors, resistors & semi-conductors as they work today with brushes, violins and junk.

I have treated cathode ray tube (TV screen) as a canvas, and proved that it can be a superior canvas. From now on, I will treat the cathode ray as a paper and penn ... If Joyce lived today, surely he would have written "Finnegan's Wake" on videotape, because of the vast possibility of manipulation in magnetic information storage.

BYUNG-KI HWANG SEOUL**A Very Eccentric Man, 1993**

On a certain day in the autumn of 1967, I had made a dinner date with Namjune Paik at a Chinese restaurant near the Pennsylvania Station in New York City. I arrived there at the appointed time and waited for his arrival. He came a little later than the appointed time in full dress with a necktie. He was sweating profusely. Because he was carrying with him a very weighty sack of what looked like flour. "What's this?" I asked him. He was to visit his friend on Long Island after dinner. He said "please open it if you're curious". I opened it to find the sack was full of earth. Although I laughed, I was inwardly very much surprised. In the midnight he was bringing a sack of earth as a gift to his friend on Long Island. I thought that he was indeed an eccentric man, a natural eccentric like earth which is not contaminated by man-made filth.

Peking Man, 1992

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Java Man, 1992

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Ohm, 1992

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

Faraday, 1992

Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati